

CORRESPONDENCE

wrote 'However, we also know that there are many differences in citation dynamics across fields. So, impact factors should only be considered in terms of the category involved'¹².

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Man versus monkey

When a species constructs its niche in urban areas, its aggressive behaviour is likely to increase due to competition for food and space and high density¹. This is evident in the case of monkeys which become commensals and competitors of human beings² and give rise to serious conflicts in both urban and rural areas, mostly for food and space³. Rhesus macaques (*Macaca mulatta*), Hanuman langurs (*Semnopithecus entellus*)⁴ and lion-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*)⁵ have been reported to be involved in conflicts with human beings. Rhesus monkeys are aggressive⁶ and an explosion of their population in the present times has intensified their competition with humans for food and space⁷. In India, 86% of the total rhesus monkey population resides near human habitations⁸ and monkey menace is prevalent in many parts of the country. For example, an increase in man–monkey conflict and indifference of the authorities towards the issue have resulted in public protests to eradicate the population of rhesus monkeys in Shimla and also in the rural areas of Himachal Pradesh⁹. Over hundred people are bitten by monkeys everyday and this results in a daily expenditure of about Rs 2.5 lakh on vaccines for the victims. Besides, there is also a greater probability of transmission of many other disease germs like the Herpes B virus¹⁰ due to such conflicts. Indians have many religious and tradi-

tional beliefs about monkeys, but frequent conflicts have affected the traditional bond between man and monkey in India¹¹. However, all primates do not have the same capacity to become urbanized¹².

Proper education on wildlife conservation, especially involving children, lawyers and legislatures is the key to find a solution^{3,13}. Besides, developmental programmes must be thoroughly tuned to protect animal rights. In addition, prior to allowing forest diversion proposals, a proper Environment Impact Assessment must be done¹⁴. The current methods of dealing with monkey menace are inefficient and only contribute to further accelerating the problem¹³. Hence, strategies need to be developed to minimize the dependence of rhesus macaque on human resources to avoid conflicts⁹. Behavioural studies under naturalistic conditions are required to be undertaken in order to develop efficient management and conservation strategies to resolve the man–monkey conflict¹⁵.

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